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ABSTRACT

This study presents historical data describing the building and consolidating of 1 and 2 room schools in Kentucky from 1914 to 1969. The report consists of 4 sections: (1) brief history, (2) pictures, (3) newspaper clippings, and (4) maps. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (TL)

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THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE
in kentucky

ED034629

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A STUDY OF
ONE AND TWO ROOM SCHOOLS
IN
KENTUCKY

BY
DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL
ATTENDANCE AND ACCOUNTING

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Wendell P. Butler, Superintendent of Public Instruction
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Personnel Services
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Accounting

June 1969

FOREWORD

In December 1968, Mr. Samuel M. Alexander, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, realizing the importance of the historical background relating to building and consolidating of one and two-room schools in Kentucky, suggested that historical facts be gathered, compiled and filed for future reference. At Mr. Alexander's suggestion the Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services, Division of Pupil Personnel Attendance and Accounting, reviewed such publications as Biennial Reports of Superintendents of Public Instruction, Histories of Education in Kentucky and various Educational Bulletins. Due to incomplete data or lack of recorded data it was not possible to make this report complete for the period covered.

Wendell P. Butler
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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BRIEF HISTORY

The one room or two-room school which dominated the educational scene in the State of Kentucky for a hundred years is the type of school building often referred to as "the little red school house".

These early schools were located wherever there were a few students whose parents could or would pay pedagogues for their services as teachers. The poorly planned frame structure was usually constructed on an unprofitable piece of land located in the center of the area it was designed to serve. Since these one-room schools were built to serve isolated communities, the patrons of the village or rural section considered it a center of community pride as well as a conventionalized institution.

James H. Fuqua, Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1903 to 1907, in setting forth his opinions and suggestions for the improvement of education in Kentucky said, "One of the worst features of our present school system is the large number of small schools that exist under it." During the 1918-19 school year when Kentucky had its largest number of one-room schools, there were 7,067 in operation; in the present school year, 1968-69, there are 146 one-room schools in operation. In a period of fifty years, Kentucky public school districts have abolished 6,921 (98 percent) of its one-room schools.

Three factors are primarily responsible for the decline of one-room schools. The advent of transportation made it possible to consolidate a number of the small schools. This factor has probably contributed more toward the abolishment of one-room schools than any other. According to

available records, the Mayslick School in Mason County was the first consolidated school in Kentucky. The following quote is taken from a report made by T. J. Coates, Supervisor, State Department of Education, and is found on page 232 of the Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the 1910-11 biennium:

There is a minimum below which there cannot be an efficient school. This minimum is probably a school of two teachers and forty students. The schools of the State should be reorganized as rapidly as possible, and consolidation should be employed when practicable. Since one-room schools must be retained, only the best and most expensive teachers should be placed in charge of them.

I have done some work in assisting with consolidation in a few counties. In Madison County two consolidated schools are planned, while in Mason County at Mayslick we have the first real consolidated school with regular transportation of students at public expense. Five districts are consolidated at Mayslick...They have purchased six thirty-pupil wagons. This is the beginning of a great movement. I am glad I had the chance to help in the good work. The County Superintendent, Jesse O. Yancey, and the local trustee, Mr. Pyle, deserve the greatest honor in this pioneer movement, and I am sure their names will be written high in educational history.

The growth of population in small villages and towns has made it necessary to abolish small schools and construct larger ones. In more recent years, from 1955 to the present, emphasis on accreditation and evaluation has been a large factor in the decline of one-room schools in the State.

As stated previously, "the little red school house" was a source of community pride to the patrons of the village it served. Consolidation of the community school was opposed, but the citizenry realized the advantages of larger schools. As compared to the small one teacher, one-room school, the larger school could offer better trained teachers, greater variety of curricula and extra-curricular activities, better

adaptation on the part of graduates to the present social order, and better leadership in business, industry and government, resulting from a broader and better education.

During Rev. Robert Jefferson Breckenridge's first administration as Superintendent of Public Instruction (1847-1851), he announced the "complete establishment" of the Kentucky school system. In 1847, there was a total of 170 schools in the State; 1848, there were 406 schools; 1849, there were 825 schools; 1850, there were 3,704 schools. In 1867, under Z. F. Smith's administration as State Superintendent, 4,477 schools were taught. Although these figures do not give the number of one-room schools, two-room schools, etc., records do show how many one and two-teacher schools there were for the years listed as follows:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>One-Teacher Schools</u>	<u>Two-Teacher Schools</u>
1914-15	6,580	868
1915-16	-	-
1916-17	-	-
1917-18	7,150	-
1918-19	7,067	-
1919-20	-	-
1920-21	-	-
1921-22	6,809	-
1922-23	6,545	-
1923-24	6,403	639
1924-25	6,166	-
1925-26	6,321	-
1926-27	6,403	718
1927-28	6,267	830
1928-29	6,147	876
1929-30	6,089	910
1930-31	6,202	1,135
1931-32	5,741	-
1932-33	-	-
1933-34	-	-
1934-35	5,367	995
1935-36	-	-
1936-37	4,522	-
1937-38	4,431	1,059
1938-39	4,383	1,052
1939-40	4,200	-
1940-41	-	-

<u>School Year</u>	<u>One-Teacher Schools</u>	<u>Two-Teacher Schools</u>
1941-42	3,964	884
1942-43	350 Negro	-
1943-44	-	-
1944-45	311 Negro	65 Negro
1945-46	-	-
1946-47	284 Negro	51 Negro
1947-48	3,573	866
1948-49	3,295	832
1949-50	-	-
1950-51	2,999	781
1951-52	-	-
1952-53	2,600	715
1953-54	-	-
1954-55	2,238	-
1955-56	2,093	597
1956-57	1,801	509
1957-58	1,523	471
1958-59	1,382	434
1959-60	1,244	395
1960-61	1,116	339
1961-62	970	318
1962-63	853	285
1963-64	695	233
1964-65	546	176
1965-66	422	166
1966-67	340	100
1967-68	231	63
1968-69	146	51

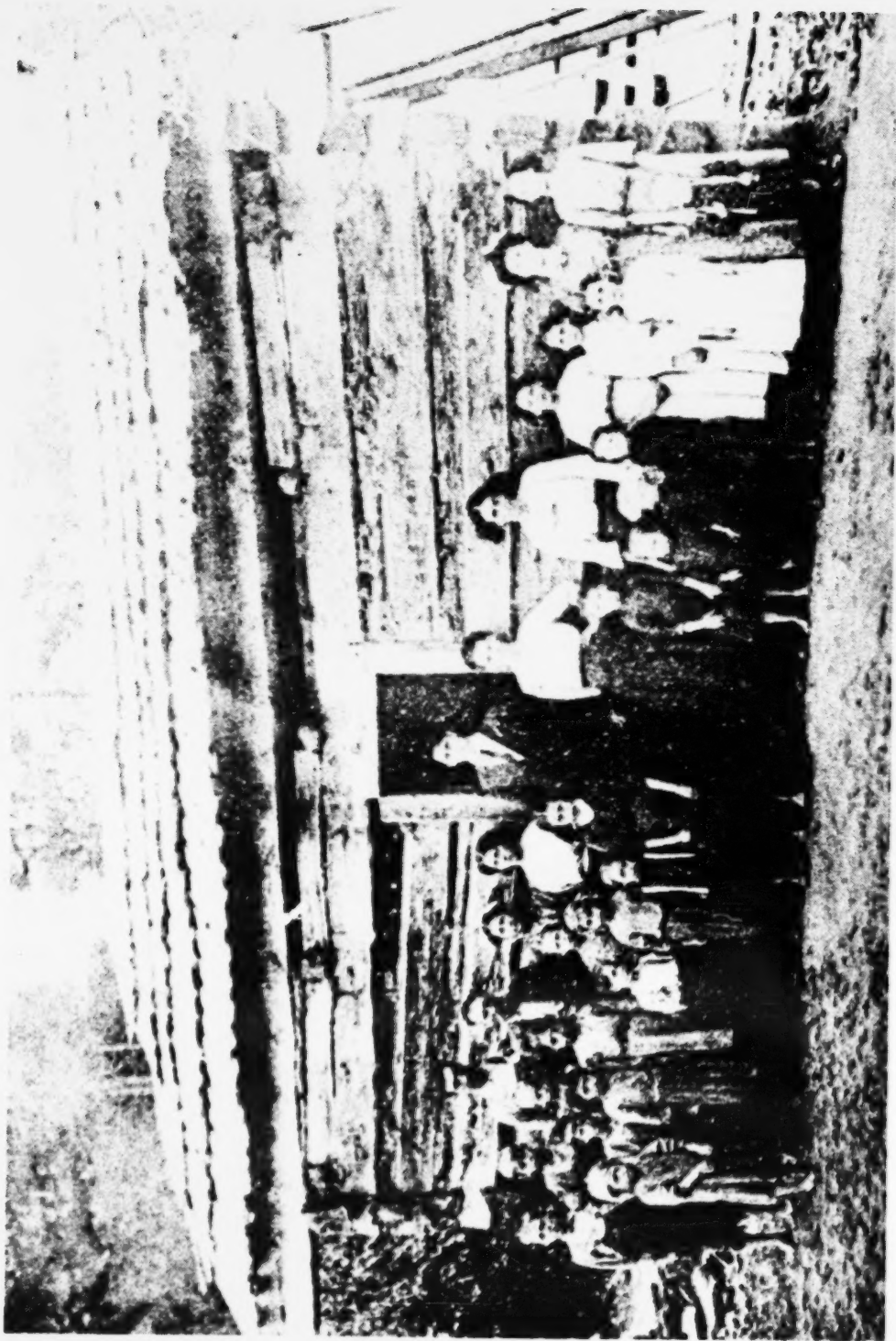
An attempt has been made to list the number of one-teacher and two-teacher schools in Kentucky from the school year 1914-15 to the present school year, 1968-69. Sources used to gather this information were: History of Education in Kentucky, published by Kentucky Department of Education, July 1914; A Study of Local School Units in Kentucky, published June 30, 1937; History of Education in Kentucky 1939-1964, published by State Department of Education; Superintendent's Biennial Reports; Educational Bulletins. It was not possible to find the number of one room and two-room schools for every school year. Some of the references used were slightly contradictory. Since the number of one-room schools has been steadily declining since the 1926-27 school year, the number that

would coincide with this decline was used. For three school years (1942-43, 1944-45, 1946-47) only the number of one-room Negro schools could be found.

P I C T U R E S



ROCKY HILL SCHOOL, LEE COUNTY
Earliest type of rural school buildings



COW HORN SCHOOL, WAYNE COUNTY
Earliest type of rural school buildings

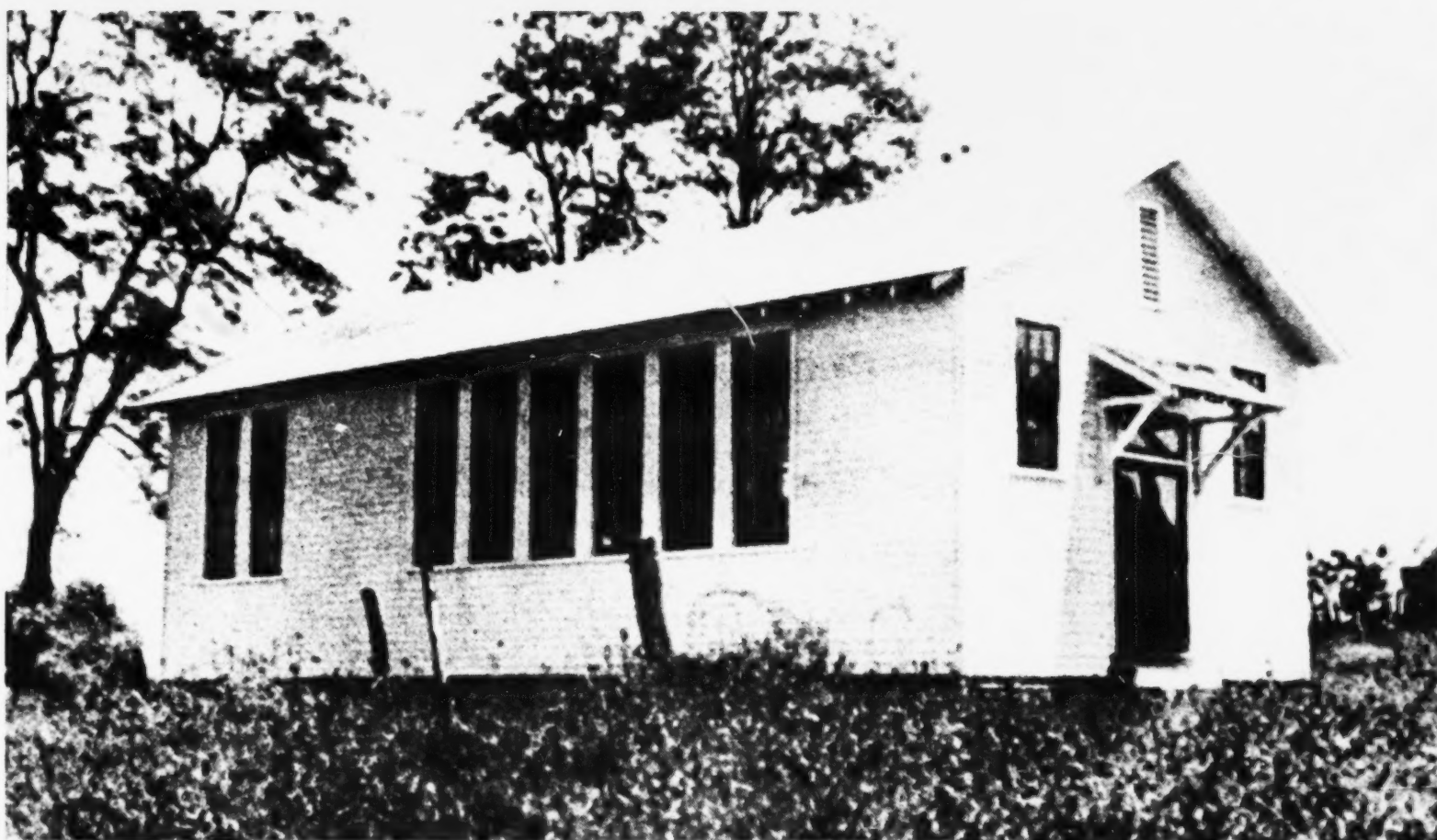
August, 1932

Significant Buildings in Mason County



The old school, Superintendent Turnipseed calling.

Below: The new school, a modern one-teacher building.



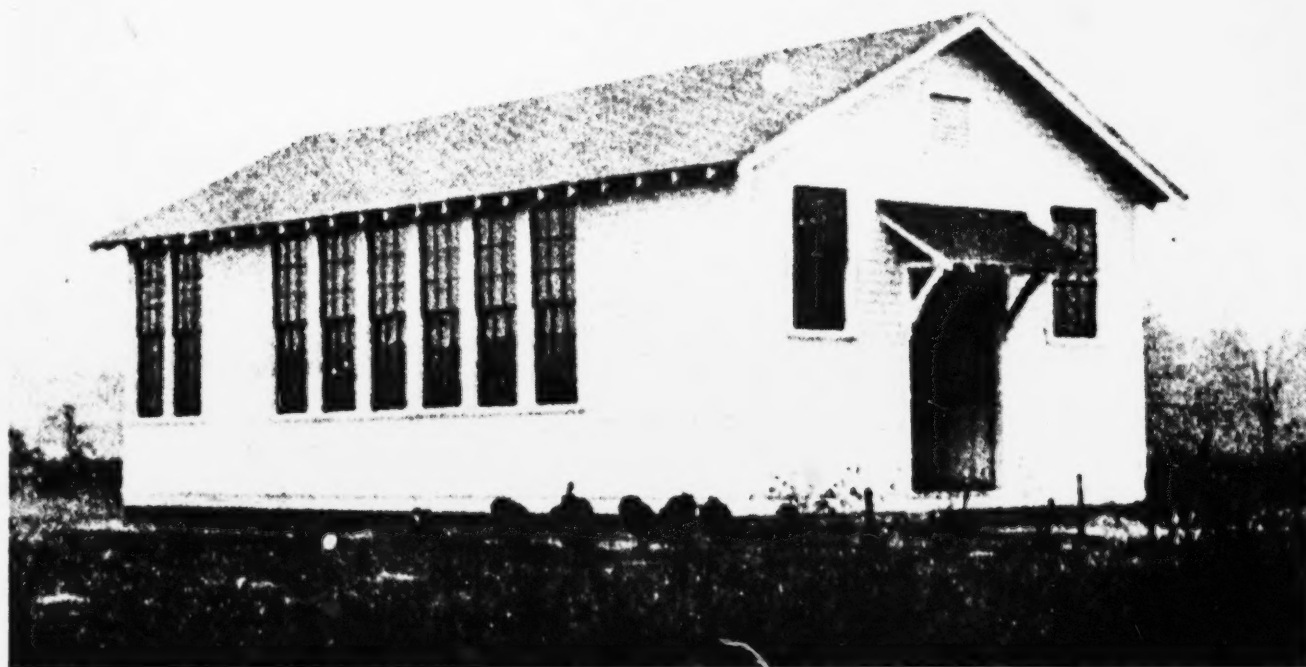
KENTUCKY PROGRESS MAGAZINE

August, 1932

The old and the new in Christian, Dyers Chapel School



The old before H. W. Peters became Superintendent of Public Instruction



The new after H. W. Peters became Superintendent of Public Instruction

1936 - 1940



Interior of old type, one-teacher school. Notice seating.



On his way to the state superintendency of Kentucky schools, Wendell P. Butler, pictured in the window, spent his second year of teaching at Little Barren Elementary School, Green County, a one-room school where he had 38 pupils. Mr. Butler, now serving his third term as State Superintendent, has played an integral role in the reduction of one-room school situations, realizing from the beginning that "this condition was wrong."



VORTEX SCHOOL, WOLFE COUNTY

Senator Robert F. Kennedy stopped at this school in February 1968 during his tour of Appalachia. His purpose for the tour was to determine the effects of the war on poverty program and the needs of the people in connection with this program. This school existed as a one-room school prior to 1898 through the school year 1967-68 when it was consolidated with the Wolfe County Elementary School at Campton.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Statistics Tell Story Of Disappearance Of 1-Room Schools

By ALLAN M. TROUT
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

FRANKFORT, Ky. — With only 422 specimens left, the one-room school is swiftly disappearing from the scene of public education in Kentucky.

Of these, 413 are in the counties of East Kentucky officially designated as Appalachia and comprising roughly one-third of the state. Only 9 are in the remaining two-thirds of the state—six in Grayson County, and one each in the counties of Christian, Marshall, and McCracken.

The figures, as of Oct. 1, 1965, were gleaned yesterday from statistics of the state Department of Education in view of the recent charge, and denial, that

federal funds arising from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 are serving the political power structure of East Kentucky, instead of impoverished pupils the money was intended to help.

The charge was made by Gerald Grant, following his survey of the region as a reporter for the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post Service. They were branded as "exaggerated" by U.S. Rep. Carl D. Perkins, Hindman, author of the congressional act and whose district lies within Appalachia.

Reduction Gains Speed

The rapidity with which one-room schools are disappearing is illustrated by the reduction from 3,278 to 422 in 17 years.

It required nine years to cut in half the 1948 total of 3,278. By 1957 the total had been reduced to 1,523. It required seven years to cut in half this total, so that by 1964 the number stood at 853. It has required only a year, however, to reduce this by one-half, to the 422 remaining in use this term.

The major reason for one-room schools, of course, is that they serve isolated communities, often without all weather access to larger schools, due to mountainous terrain.

Nevertheless, they are being absorbed into larger schools as more and more money is channeled into better roads and bridges, and more and more counties are progressing to complete consolidation.

Bell Free of One-Roomers

Bell is the only true mountain county in Appalachia without a one-room school. Fourteen other counties in Appalachia do not have one-room schools. Three are in the Ohio Valley—Boyd, Greenup, and Lewis.

The remaining 11 are in a buffer zone running north from Adair County, separating the true mountain area from the foothills that roll down to the blue grass terrain of Central Kentucky. In this buffer are the counties of Casey, Lincoln, Garrard, Madison, Powell, Clark, Montgomery, Menifee, Bath, Rowan, and Fleming.

Pike and Monroe counties lead Appalachia with 31 one-room schools each. Russell trails with one. The listing in Appalachia follows:

Adair, 10; Breathitt, 9; Carter, 6; Clay, 28; Clinton, 7; Cumberland, 4; Elliott, 18; Estill, 4; Floyd, 23; Green, 3; Harlan, 6; Jackson, 4; Johnson, 17; Knott, 17; Knox, 24; Laurel, 9; Lawrence, 16; Lee, 3; Leslie, 23; Letcher, 15; Magoffin, 14; Martin, 5; McCreary, 4; Monroe, 31; Morgan, 5; Owsley, 3; Perry, 26; Pike, 31; Pulaski, 3; Rockcastle, 14; Russell, 1; Wayne, 9; Whitley, 7, and Wolfe, 4.

The Courier-Journal
April 17, 1966

One-Teacher Schools Continue to Vanish

Special to The Courier-Journal

FRANKFORT, Ky.—Eighty-two one-teacher schools closed this year in Kentucky, joining the consolidation movement which began in the public school system more than a decade ago.

The state Department of Education reports the state has 340 one-teacher public schools this year as compared with 422 last year.

Also removed from the public school system were 26 two-teacher schools, leaving a total of 100. Education authorities say three-teacher schools are cut from 58 to 49.

A report released by the department shows a total of 1,927 schools in the public school system compared with 2,057 last year. This includes 1,123 schools of four or more teachers up through junior high school and 315 high schools.

All but one of the one-teacher schools are in 32 Appalachian counties, where most of the reduction of one-teacher schools was made. The one exception is in Grayson County in Western Kentucky, which reduced its total from six this year.

The department said the other three one-teacher schools listed last year outside of Appalachia, all in Western Kentucky, are among those closed.

Appalachian Counties Progress

Dr. Harry M. Sparks, superintendent of public instruction, said it is significant that 17 of the 49 counties designated as Appalachia by the federal Bureau of Health, Education and Welfare have

closed all one-teacher schools. These counties, most of which are on the northern and western side of the region, are:

McCreary, Bell, Casey, Lincoln, Garrard, Jackson, Madison, Clark, Montgomery, Powell, Menifee, Fleming, Rowan, Lewis, Greenup and Boyd.

He said most of the Appalachian counties made some reduction in one-teacher schools this year.

Sparks said emphasis on accreditation and evaluation was a large factor in the decline of one-teacher schools in Kentucky since 1955, when there were 2,238.

He said, however, money available for construction purposes is the biggest factor in eliminating one-teacher schools.

Others Harder to Eliminate

Sparks said the remaining 340 schools will be more difficult to eliminate now that construction costs have gone up by more than 20 per cent. He said the problem is made more difficult in Appalachia by remote and isolated areas which do not exist in most other sections of the state.

The other counties with one-teacher schools are:

Green 2, Adair 9, Monroe 25, Cumberland 3, Clinton 5, Pulaski 1, Russell 1, Wayne 9, Whitley 5, Knox 20, Laurel 7, Rockcastle 8, Clay 24, Leslie 22, Harlan 6, Owsley 1, Estill 1, Lee 2, Breathitt 6, Perry 22, Letcher 12, Knott 16, Pike 27, Floyd 22, Martin 4, Johnson 13, Magoffin 9, Wolfe 14, Morgan 2, Elliott 18, Lawrence 16, and Carter 5.

The Courier-Journal
October 23, 1966

95 One-Room, 24 Two-Room Schools Eliminated By State

State school board officials reported Wednesday that 95 isolated one-room and 24 two-room schools had been eliminated in Kentucky last year.

This leaves a total of 137 one-room and 89 two-room schools in the state, state Supt. of Public Instruction Wendell P. Butler reported to the regular meeting of the school board.

Asst. Supt. James Melton said he expected "a dramatic reduction this year" in the remaining isolated schools because of construction already slated.

An isolated school is defined as one with fewer than 100 pupils and at least nine miles from any larger school.

The largest number of isolated still operating is in Perry County which has 34. Other counties having large numbers are Leslie with 24, Clay with 18 and Floyd with 17.

Melton also reported that average salary to certified teachers last year throughout Kentucky was \$6,821 which was \$536 above the previous year. The average for this year also was \$1,053

above that of the 1966-67 school year.

In county school districts, 14 had average salaries of less than \$6,000 and three had an average of more than \$7,000. In independent school districts, 12 had averages of more than \$7,000 and one less than \$6,000.

County districts having an average of more than \$7,000 were Jefferson with \$8,070; Daviess with \$7,024 and Fayette with \$7,049.

County districts having averages under \$6,000 were Carter, Clay, Edmonson, Jessamine, Lawrence, Letcher, Lewis, Magoffin, Morgan, Owen, Perry, Washington, Webster and Wolfe.

In independent districts Augusta was the only with an average salary under \$6,000. Five had averages of greater than \$8,000.

Anchorage, Beechwood, Fort Thomas, Louisville and Williamstown. The seven with averages greater than \$7,000 were Bardstown, Covington, Elizabethtown, Lynch, Owensboro, Paducah and Walton-Verona.

Butler reported to the board

that employment in his department had increased by 358 from Jan. 1, 1968 to Jan. 1 this year. The greatest increase in any division, he said, was for vocational schools which had 270 instructors. This was because of more schools being opened, he said.

The point on personnel was prompted by a request from the Legislative Research Commission.

In particular the LRC had raised some question of the large number of seasonal employees were for instructional staffs in vocational schools. These total 299 at this time, he said.

Butler said there also were 185 dual employees who for the most part were teachers serving as evening extension instructors in vocational schools.

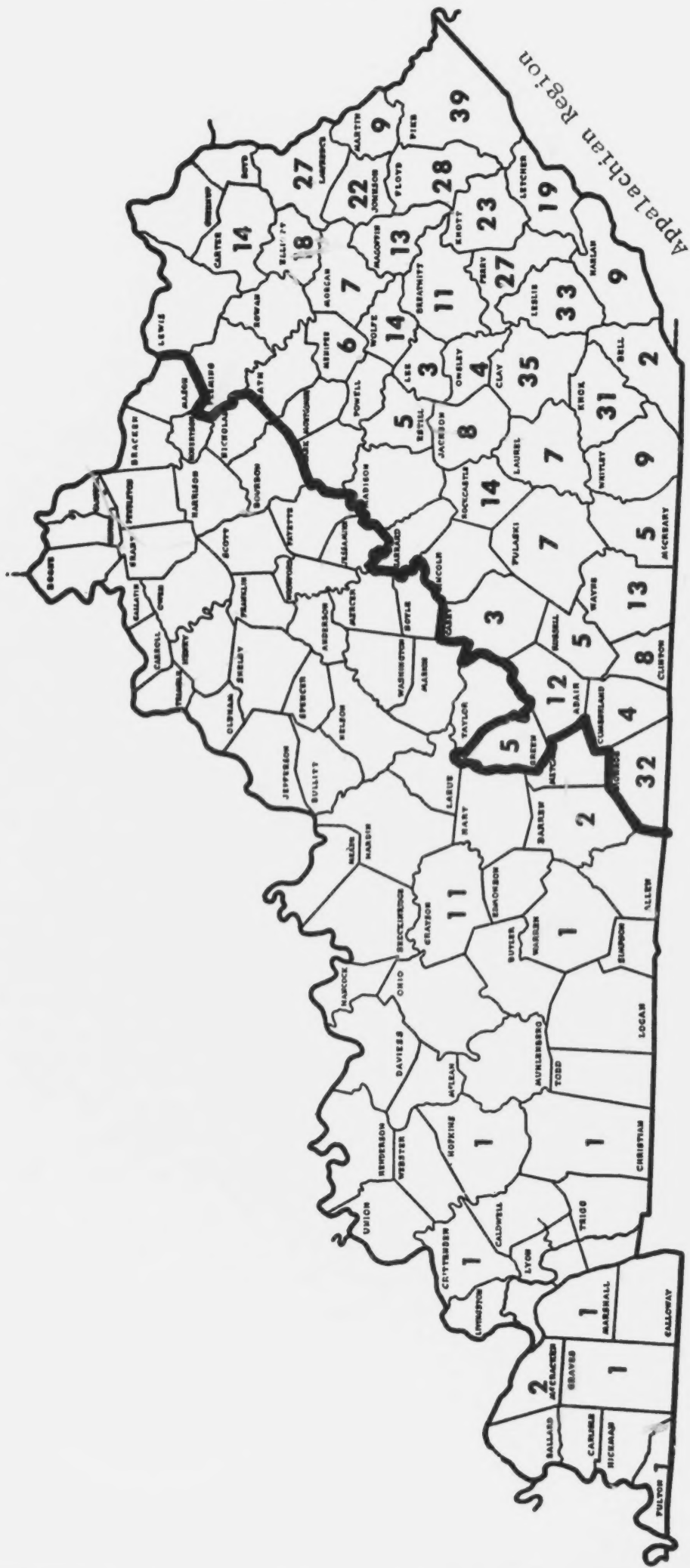
Butler denied what he said a rumor that his department had become a dumping ground for Democrats fired from other state agencies.

Butler, a Democrat, is one of the officers elected by popular vote.

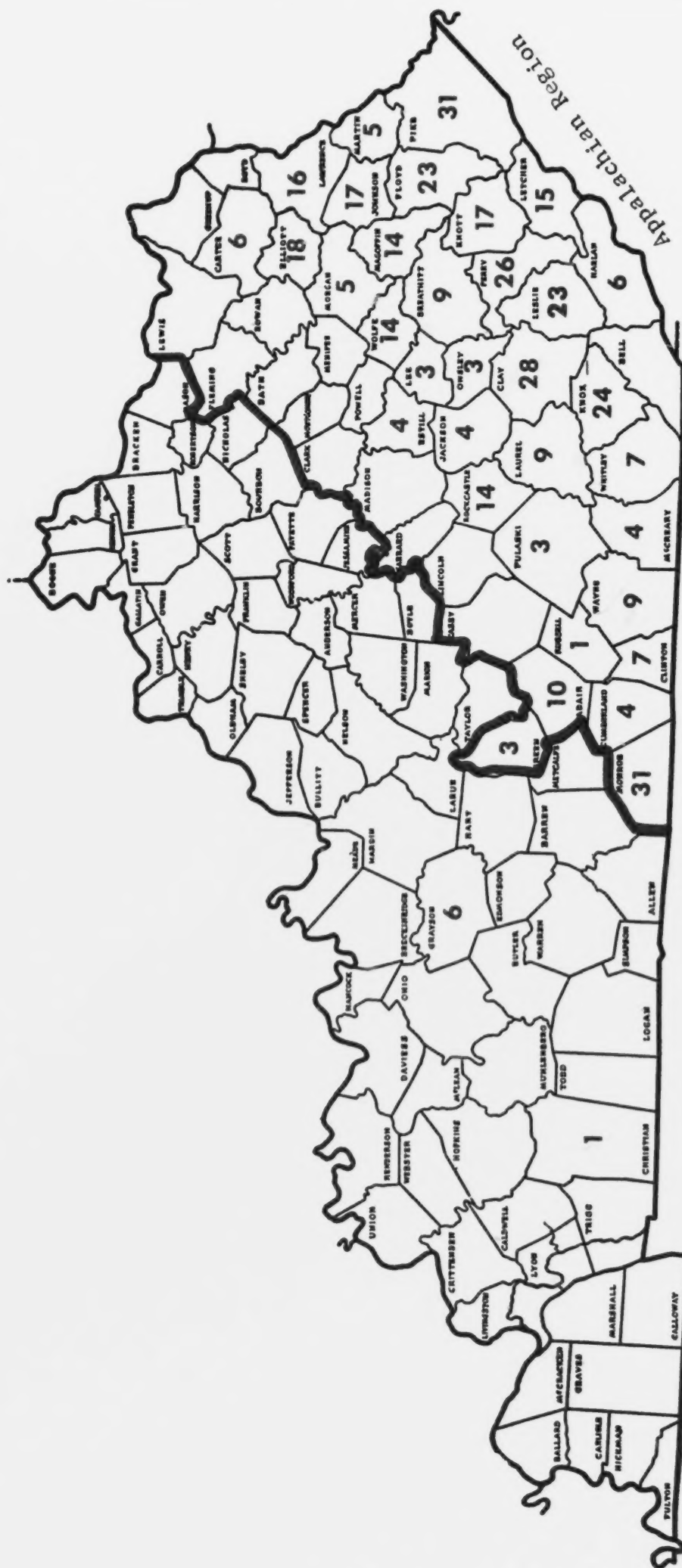
The State Journal
March 20, 1969

M A P S

ONE TEACHER SCHOOLS - 1964-65 - 553



553	- One Teacher
181	- Two Teacher
82	- Three Teacher
1,157	- Four or More T
<u>335</u>	- High Schools
2,308	- Total Schools



422 - One Teacher	
126 - Two Teacher	
58 - Three Teacher	
1,130 - Four or More Teachers (Includes Jr. High Schools)	
<u>321 - High Schools</u>	
2,057 - Total Schools	

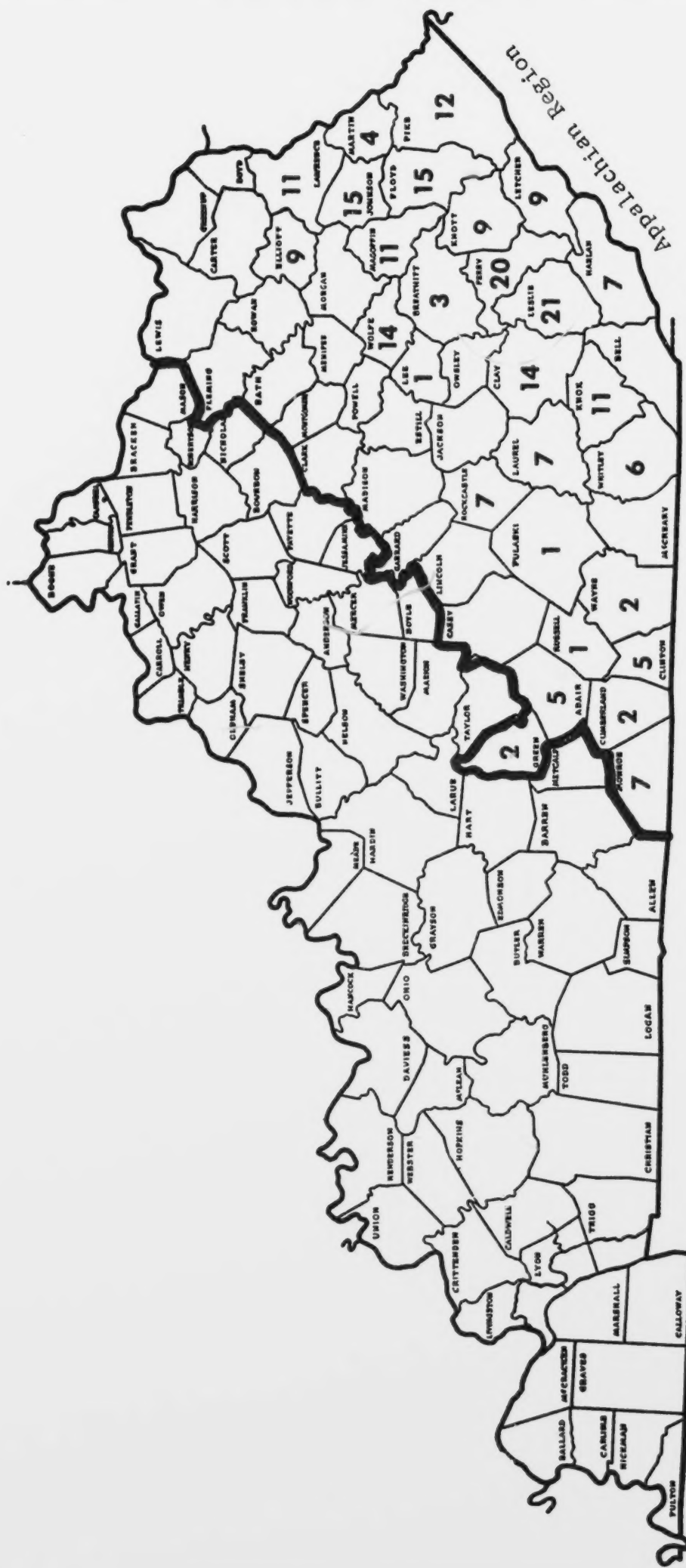
Appalachian Region

340 - One Teacher
 100 - Two Teacher
 49 - Three Teacher
 1,123 - Four or More Teachers (Includes Jr. High Schools)
 315 - High Schools
 1,927 - Total Schools

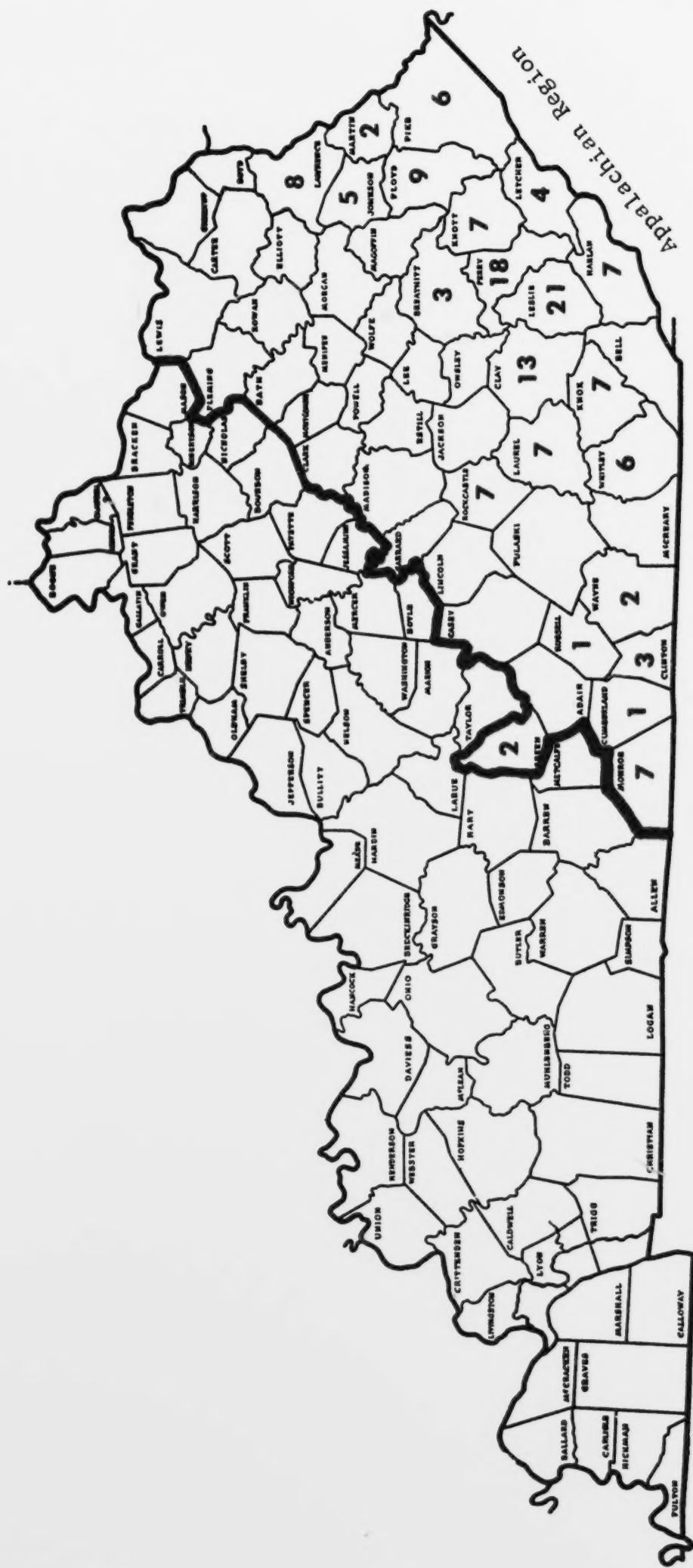
100 - Two Teacher

1,123 - Four or More Teachers (Includes Jr. High Schools)

1,927 - Total Schools



231	-	One Teacher
63	-	Two Teacher
42	-	Three Teacher
1,127	-	Four or More T
<u>313</u>	-	High Schools
1,776	-	Total Schools



146 - One Teacher	
51 - Two Teacher	
33 - Three Teacher	
1,140 - Four or More Teachers (Includes Jr. High Schools)	
<u>304 - High Schools</u>	
1,674 - Total Schools	

The cost of printing this bulletin was paid from state funds.